1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

all three branches of the Negrito race use arrows with detachable heads. Arrows of this kind from the Philippines are described by Meyer[1].

An important point of difference would seem to be that while the Andamanese do not feather their arrows the Semang and the Negritos of the Philippines do so. It would seem, however, from the account of Semang arrows given by Skeat[2] that the feathering is such that it is of no actual service in directing the flight of the weapon, and that it is doubtful whether the Semang really understand the principle of feathering, or whether they do not employ it as the mutilated survival of more intelligent methods or perhaps make use of it for solely magical purposes.

Another important point of difference is that the Semang poison their arrows, while the Andamanese do not. In this connection it must be remembered that the former people have for long been neighbours of people who use blow-pipes with poisoned darts.

After the bow and arrow the most important hunting weapon of the Great Andaman is the harpoon which is used in capturing dugong, turtle, porpoise, and large fish. The harpoon consists of a head, a shaft and a line. The line is a length of rope of *Hibiscus* fibre of as much as twenty fathoms or more in length. The shaft is a bamboo of about 18 feet in length. One end is cut off fairly near a node and is then served over with thread, and slightly hollowed. The head consists of a long piece of iron, such as a stout nail, brought to a sharp point at one end. The other end is served over with thread in such a way as to make it fit fairly tightly into the end of the bamboo shaft. Some distance from the point of the head two barbs of iron are attached by thread, and between this point and the lower end the line is attached. (See Fig. 23.)

A man using the harpoon stands on the forward platform of the canoe, holding the bamboo shaft in his hand. The head is inserted in the upper end of this, and the line passes over his shoulder and is coiled in the bottom of the canoe, the other end being attached to the forward out-rigger boom or to the thwart that takes its place in a large canoe. He poles the canoe along the reef with the harpoon shaft. When about to make a throw he raises the shaft till he can hold the butt end in his right hand, with the point directed towards the fish or turtle, and he then leaps forward so that if he succeeds in his aim the weapon strikes with all the force of his weight behind it. When the turtle or fish is struck the bamboo shaft floats loose and this is secured

[1] Meyer, Plates VI and VIII.

[2] Skeat, p. 274.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

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by the man in the water, who returns to the canoe. It may be necessary to strike the prey with a second harpoon, but if the first was well thrown the animal is firmly held by the line.

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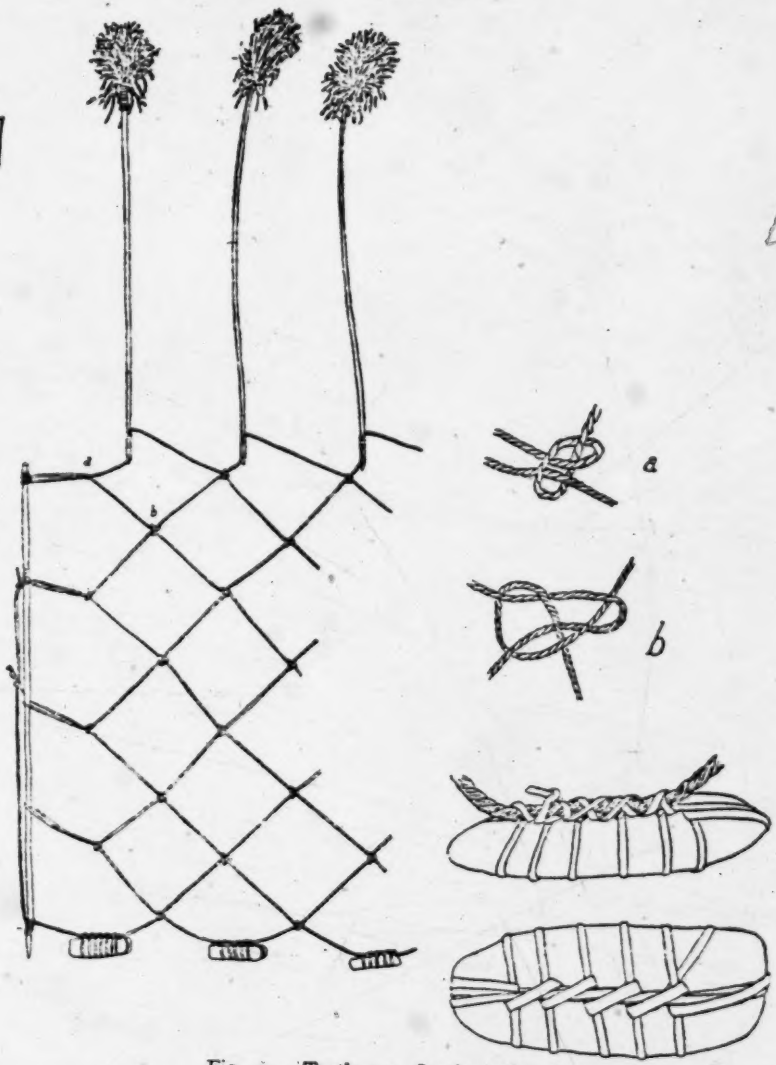

Fig. 24. Turtle net, South Andaman

Harpoons are not used in the Little Andaman. The natives of the Great Andaman say that they themselves have only used them since

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

they were able to obtain iron and that before that time they could only capture turtle and dugong in nets. It would seem therefore that the harpoon has been invented or adopted by the tribes of the Great Andaman Division in comparatively recent times, and was not an element of the primitive Andamanese culture.

The turtle net is no longer used, as the natives prefer the harpoon and have all the iron they need. Such nets were formerly made of rope of *Hibiscus* fibre. A net was about 150 cm. in width and of variable length. One specimen that was made for me had an open mesh of about 25 cm. square, while another had a smaller mesh. The knot used in a net from the South Andaman is the ordinary fisherman's knot shown in Fig. 24 *b*. In a net from the North Andaman the knot used is a slip-knot, one strand being tied with an overhand knot over another which it crosses at right angles as shown in Fig. 25.

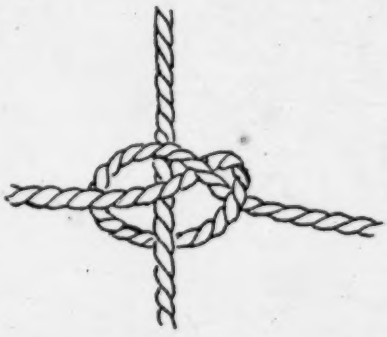

Fig. 25. Knot used in making the North Andaman turtle net

Each end of the turtle net is attached to a stake pointed at the lower end. The lower edge of the net is weighted with stones attached as shown in Fig. 24, while to the upper edge are attached a number of floats, each consisting of a long thin stick of *Hibiscus* wood to the upper end of which is attached a tassel of fibre.

The net was placed in shallow water so that the stones rested on the bottom while the tassels at the upper ends of the floats appeared above the surface. As soon as a turtle was entangled in the net the agitation could be observed by those watching who would proceed to the spot to secure their capture.

So far as is known it would seem that nets of this description are not used in the Little Andaman.

The Andamanese make practically no use of spears. At the present time the natives of the Great Andaman Division sometimes make pig-spears of a length of stout cane or rattan with a head of iron attached. The natives themselves say that such spears have only been made since the occupation of the islands, and it is probable that they were first made in imitation of spears used by Burmese convicts for pig-hunting. They are hardly ever used, the pig-arrow being preferred.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

501 better in a rough sea than a smaller one with an outrigger. It is possible that at first these large canoes were propelled with paddles just as the outrigger canoes are, the paddlers facing forward. Having learnt to understand the principle of the oar, through their contact with the Penal Settlement, the natives applied this principle to their own canoes. It could not, of course, be applied to the small canoes, as the shape of the canoe and the position of the paddler make the use of an oar impossible. It could be applied very easily, however, to the new large canoes. In these the oarsman does not sit on a level with the gunwale, but sits down in the hull itself on a piece of wood resting on the two sides of the hull a few inches above the floor. The gunwale of the canoe is thus about on a level with the bottom of his sternum. A number of holes are made in the gunwale on each side, and by means of these, loops of cane are attached to the gunwale. The oar, which is shaped in imitation of European oars, but with a short shaft, is thrust through the loop of cane, which serves as a fulcrum or rowlock. The rowers face aft. A man at the stern steers with a paddle. In shallow water the large canoes are propelled with poles in exactly the same way as the smaller canoes.

In the bow, at about the position that would be occupied by the foremost boom in an outrigger canoe, holes are made in the gunwale on each side and a piece of wood is thrust through them as a sort of thwart. This is to provide a means of making fast the end of the harpoon line or the anchor line, and thus serves a purpose that is served by the foremost boom in the outrigger canoe.

●225 The large canoes are not quite so useful in turtle-hunting as the smaller outrigger variety, as they cannot be so quickly turned when the pursued turtle doubles. Very often a large canoe and a small canoe are taken together on an expedition, the harpooning being mostly done from the smaller one while the captured turtles are placed in the larger one. A small canoe with three or four men cannot hold more than one or at most two big turtles, whereas as many as ten or a dozen can be stowed in one of the large canoes.

501 505 The chief use of the large canoes is to make journeys from place to place. One of the largest will hold as many as thirty men and women with their baggage, whereas an outrigger canoe would never carry more than nine or ten. Further, there is less chance of an even heavily laden big canoe capsizing in a rough sea than of an outrigger canoe doing so. One result of the introduction of the large canoe has therefore been to enable the natives to move much

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

411 [177] 22. It is not found that they have any inclination to adopt civilised weapons or tools in lieu of their own, but they have not been slow to avail themselves of the facilities afforded them in recent years for substituting iron for shell, bone, and (?) stone,[1] in the manufacture of their various implements.

23. The blow-pipe, which is used so generally by the Negritos (*Semangs*) of the Malayan peninsula, finds no place among the weapons of these savages. Its absence may be readily accounted for, firstly by their ignorance of poison, or at least of any method of utilising such knowledge as any of them may possess, and secondly by the fact that they are so well able to supply all their wants with the implements already referred to in the foregoing, that their inventive faculty has not been sharpened by the pangs of hunger to devise other or more effective means of destruction. It may be added that slings, throwing sticks, clubs, bird-bolts, or blunt-headed arrows for stunning animals or birds, are likewise not in use among them.

[224] 24. Although the pig is the object of their chase in their hunting expeditions, they invariably take a few of their pointed arrows, preferably the *tó·lbō·d-*, on the chance of coming across some smaller game, such as an iguana or paradoxurus.[2] To facilitate rapid shooting a man will often hold a number of arrows in the hand which grasps the bow.

[225] 25. From constant practice they are, as might be supposed, very skilful at shooting fish under water. Dr. Brander has correctly observed that "they seem intuitively to have calculated with great accuracy the difference of direction to be allowed for oblique aqueous refraction;" but these shots are almost always, if not invariably, made at a distance of a few yards only, and never so far as "30 yards,"[3] or "with three-pronged barbed arrows," such missiles being neither made nor used, at least by any of the Great Andaman tribes.[4]

883 224 26. Boys soon learn to practice at near objects with the small bows and arrows to which allusion has already been made, and many of them often contribute materially to the family larder by their early prowess. It is a common sight to see youths and children (and even their elders), when travelling, wantonly shoot at small passing objects, both on land and in the water, by way

[1] *Vide* Journ. Anthrop. Inst., vol. xi, p. 271.

[2] While these two animals are killed at all seasons of the year, the pig-hunts take place chiefly during the rains, when this animal is in excellent condition, and their diet, owing to the comparative scarcity of fruit and honey, less varied; even if with young the pig is not spared.

[3] The well-nigh impossibility of ever seeing from the shore or from a canoe a fish swimming at such a distance would sufficiently account for this.

[4] It is possible that Dr. Brander saw the *single* specimen of an arrow answering to this description which was obtained in 1880 from North Sentinel Island.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

224 535 32. At the conclusion of the repast, the sportsman who has most distinguished himself during a more than ordinarily successful chase is expected to entertain the company, while they dance, with an impromptu song, in the chorus of which the women join.

225 33. Much of the foregoing applies to the *àryô·to-*, as well as to the *ē·remtâ·ga-*, except of course that, with the former, hunting expeditions are less frequent than turtling and fishing operations.

34. Turtle-hunts take place during the flood-tide, both by day and night; the favourite hour of all is that between sunset and the rising of the waning moon,[1] for then, with the aid of the phosphorescent light, called *pēwō·i-*, caused by the movements of the canoe, they are often able to discover and harpoon the turtle before it is at all aware of their approach; on these occasions they select, if possible, a rocky portion of the coast, where there is little or no foreshore, giving it as their reason that turtles frequent such places on dark nights in order to lay their eggs, and are then easily captured. At other times, the localities preferred for these expeditions are those styled *yàw·la-*, where there is a fine stretch of sand with an extensive foreshore, the reason, of course, being that every dark object is so easily seen in shallow water against a clear sandy bottom.

35. The green or edible turtle (*Chelonia virgata*), called *yâ·dī-*, is hunted both by day and night, but the hawkbill (*Caretta imbricata*), called *tàu-*, only by day, as they declare the latter is never seen on dark nights.[2] The flesh of the former is of course preferred, and no use being made of the tortoiseshell obtainable from the latter, it is treated after the feast with as little consideration as the valueless shell of the *yâ·dī-*.[3]

36. The practice of capturing turtles by "turning" them when on shore is unknown among these savages; whether this be due to their regarding it as mean and unsportsmanlike, as the disdainful looks and remarks of those I questioned on the subject would lead one to suppose, or whether it be because they so thoroughly enjoy their own methods of procedure, which so fully answer their requirements, I am not prepared to determine, but it is, nevertheless, certain that although well aware, from their knowledge of the animal's habits, that it could be easily surprised

[1] This period has accordingly received a specific name, viz., *á·kà-tig-pâ·la-*.

[2] An average size *yâ·dī-* weighs about 80 to 100 lbs., and a *tàu-* considerably less. The heaviest specimen of the former which ever came under my notice weighed about 400 lbs. The ordinary price of a full-grown turtle at Port Blair is five rupees.

[3] These remarks do not of course apply to those living at the homes, as they have long since learnt to benefit considerably by disposing of their tortoiseshell to visitors and residents at Port Blair.

2: Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

and captured when frequenting the shore, they never take advantage of the opportunities thus presented.

37. Even on the darkest nights many turtles are speared at the moment when they rise to the surface in order to breathe. The sound which they then make, though slight, is sufficient at once to attract the attention of the keen-eared *àryô·to-*[1] standing on the projecting prow, and to enable him to direct his harpoon with unerring aim; he usually jumps into the water after his victim, lest the barbed head should, in the act of dragging the line, slip out of the wound and the animal escape. When the turtle is in such deep water as to render spearing it from the canoe an impossibility, the harpooner leaps into the water feet foremost, with the spear in his hand, and frequently succeeds at once in transfixing the animal. After spearing a sting-ray, they drag it by means of the harpoon to the boat, whereupon one of the party seizes it by its tail, and holding it firmly between his *teeth*, knocks off, with a piece of wood or other instrument, the formidable spike or spikes which project from the root of the tail; after thus disarming their victim, they proceed to drag it into the canoe or to the shore.[2]

38. From the accounts of some writers respecting the prowess of the Andaman Islanders in the water, it might be inferred that they rival or even excel the "finny denizens of the deep" in their own element. This is, of course, incorrect, and due to misapprehension; the secret of their "invariably returning to the surface with some scaly prize" finds its explanation in the fact that they never think of diving[3] after a fish that has not been first transfixed (according to its size) by an arrow or harpoon.[4]

39. The art of fishing with a hook and line was unknown to, and has not found favour among them, as they are far more successful than ourselves in catching fish by their own methods,[5] which are as follow:—at low water the women and children with hand-nets capture such fish and shell-fish[6] as are left by the

[1] *Vide ante* "Tribal Communities," paragraph 5.

[2] Two or three fatal accidents have, to my knowledge, occurred in recent years on dark nights to inexperienced turtle-hunters at one or other of the homes, in consequence of their having plunged on to the back of one of these fish after harpooning it, mistaking their victim in the darkness for a turtle.

[3] "Should the fish be large some of those in the boat dive down, attacking the victim with knives and spears" (Day).

[4] They are, moreover, not in the habit of "diving for shell-fish"—except it be for a *Tridacna crocea*, which they occasionally discover in deep water—for quantities are always found in shallow water at low tide.

[5] "The present writer has seen a party of Andamanese shoot and secure nearly one hundred fish during one low tide on a coral reef, and that with no very extraordinary exertion" (*vide* "Bombay Gazette," 2nd August, 1881).

[6] The favourite time for collecting shell-fish is the low tide at daybreak occurring about the third and fourth days after new and full moon, and known to them by the name of *tô·ya-*.

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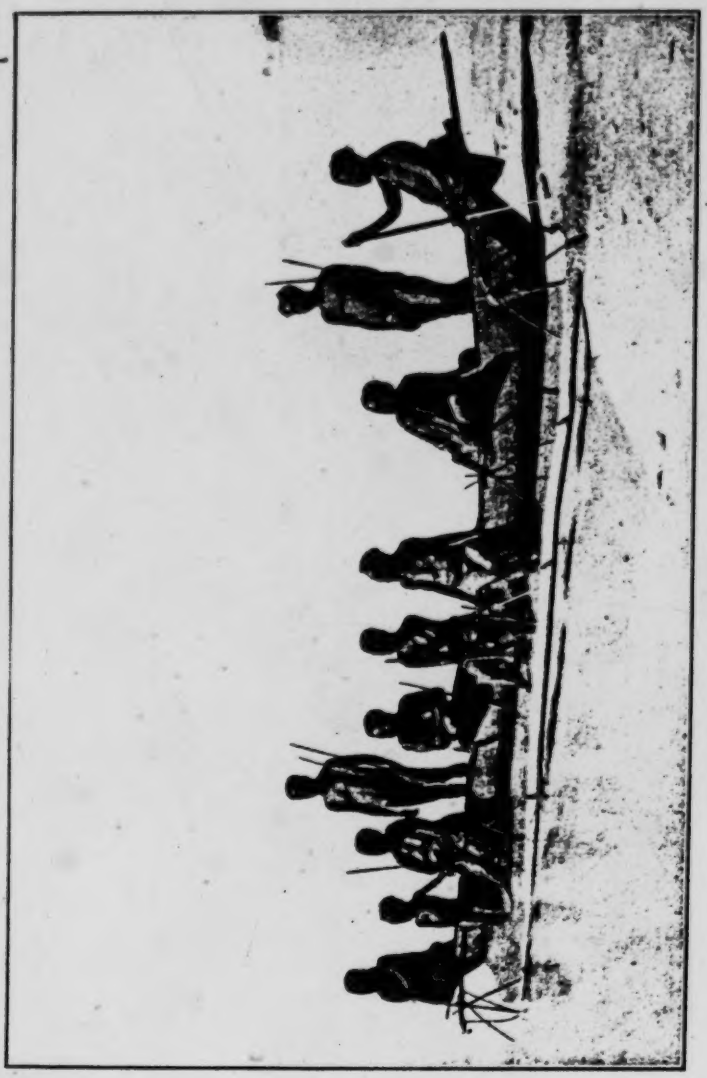

A TURTLE-HUNT.

PLATE XI.

[facing p. 164]

4: Guha E-5 (1948-1949)1953 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Report of a Survey of the Inhabitants of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands during 1948-49

[P1]

By

B. S. Guha

Director, Department of Anthropology

About the end of the year 1946, Mr H. J. Stooks, Deputy Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs, consulted me with regard to proposals made by Sri A. V. Thakkar of the Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh for undertaking work for the amelioration of the conditions of the inhabitants of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on the same lines as the Sangh has been doing among the Bhils and other tribes of Central India. The problem of the Aborigines of the Andaman Islands, however, is not the same as that of the other primitive tribes of India. These people are some of the most ancient remnants of the human race still surviving in any part of the world, who had been very little affected from contact with other people and subsist principally on fishing and hunting. The need among them is not so much the spread of education and social uplift as the arrest of the decline in population which has been most alarming. Since the establishment of the Penal Settlement at Port Blair in 1858, the condition of the "Friendly Tribes" among these inhabitants have been most distressing. Due in the beginning to armed encounters with the forces of the Government, and also as a result of ravages from diseases like tuberculosis and syphilis contracted from Indian convicts, there has been a continuous decline in the Andamanese population. From an estimated figure of about 10,000 people in 1779 the tribe has been reduced to only 70 in 1931, and at the time of our visit there were probably not more than 37 individuals still living. Whether it will be possible to save the Andamanese from the fate of the Tasmanians whose last surviving representative passed away about 1770 is extremely doubtful.

The hostile branch of the Andamanese tribes known as the Jarawa-Onge-Sentinelese group, fortunately has been spared the fate of their more "friendly" kinsmen, and as a result of implacable hostility and comparative isolation have survived to a much larger extent. In the western forest belts of Middle and South Andamans, the Little Andaman, and the North Sentinel Islands they have resisted all intrusions from outsiders and were known to have lived in these places comparatively unmolested. No accurate census of these tribes however, was ever taken, but from estimates made by people who had some knowledge of the tribes, it does not seem possible that the total strength of these people could be more than a few hundred souls altogether before the last war. What has happened since and how far these people, specially the Jarawas, have suffered from Japanese occupation cannot accurately be determined. It is known that there had been some bombing by the Japanese in the Jarawa tract, but whether any Jarawa was killed is not known. I, therefore, suggested to Mr Stooks that an anthropological survey of the Islands was essential and a probable estimate of the surviving settlements of the population made before the question of any social welfare work can be considered.

crew of the ship called him 'Raja' and we adopted this name (*see* Plate IV, Figs. 1 & 2). He was the only one among the Onges who was fully armed with knives, bows and arrows. Among the contents of the canoes, we found complete fishing out-fits, bows and arrows, ropes and nautilous shells, for bailing out water. There was also a kind of bamboo float about 1½ ft. long, probably used for turtle fishing. We gave them food, cigarettes and other presents. After they became quite familiar with us and friendly, they were subjected to full anthropometric measurements by me. Their blood was also tapped by Mr Sarkar for typing. The presents given were iron nails, strips of red cloth, tea and tobacco leaves. Among all these objects what they liked most were the tobacco leaves. Cooked rice, dal (cooked lentils) and fish curry served to them from the launch Mess were however not much appreciated. With the few Hindi words that they were able to understand, we told them that we would like to visit their camp next morning and meet other members of the party. After the canoes had left, we anchored at this point for the night and after taking an early breakfast we left for the shore in two batches. We were informed by the crew that the creek near the Onge camp was called the *Dugong Creek*. We had to wade through brakish water and coast fringing with coral beds for about two miles, before we reached the Onge settlement. There was one large circular communal hut characteristic of the Onges and several lean-to's (*see* Plate I, Fig. 2). We noticed three canoes on the beach apparently those with which they came to meet us on the previous day. We saw also several small dogs and the entrails of a pig strewn round. We met all the 12 Onges we saw the day before, along with Ukla and his family. In addition there were a number of women and children. We took out our presents of dried tobacco leaves, iron nails and two large fishes that we had caught on our way from Port Blair. These were distributed to the Onges. There were altogether 17 men, 15 women, 4 boys and 3 girls. The children were between 1½ to 4 years. The entire party of Onges behaved towards us in a friendly manner and subjected to our measurements and tapping of blood from their fingers without any protest. We went inside their hut and inspected the settlement very thoroughly. A large number of photographs were taken. We found that the name of this village was *Tambebui*. As it became rather late, we decided to return to 'Molly' in the Andamanese canoes, rather than walk through the coral beds for 2 miles. The Onges understood our signs and gladly escorted us back to the launch. We found there were several other Onges waiting for us in the launch who came from the neighbouring village *Gabilong*. All of these Onges appear to be under the influence of the man nick-named as 'Raja' (*see* Plate IV, Figs. 1-2).

We could not proceed towards Hut Bay as the launch had to return for duty at Port Blair, where we reached at about mid-night.

After reaching Port Blair, I discussed the matter of transport with the Chief Commissioner, Mr Majid. A thorough coastal survey of Little Andaman would take at least 15 to 20 days. As it was found impossible to get either from the Forest Department or from the Harbour Master any of their launches

4: Guha E-5 (1948-1949)1953 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Karen AP7

for such a fairly long period, it was decided to give up the idea of continuing our survey of the Little Andaman that year. A 122

At the suggestion of Mr Majid it was finally decided instead to pay a visit to the surviving members of the Friendly Andamanese tribes at Neil and Havelock Islands where they had now been transferred and settled. Unfortunately, as it was March and the closing month of the financial year, I had to return to my headquarters at Banaras and leave Mr Sarkar in charge of the party to carry on further surveys in the North and Middle Andamans as far as this was found possible. A 121 [131]

Accordingly Mr Sarkar with his party left Port Blair on 6-3-48 on the Forest Motor Launch "Lindsay" and arrived at Long Island at about 8 A.M. on the following day. Mr Sarkar was met by Mr Joseph, T. S. D. O. who brought "Loka" and his party of four Andamanese. They were studied by him. The party left Long Island on the Forest Launch "Kokhari" at about 7-30 A.M. on the following day. Mr Joseph accompanied the party, who halted at the Guitar Island where some of Loka's associates were hunting turtles with harpoons. After leaving Guitar Island, the launch passed through Homfray Strait. Mr Joseph showed the spot where the Jarawas in 1925 attacked his camp. This is near the place from where the Jarawas usually crossed from the Baratang Island to the Middle Andamans. Proceeding further westwards, Mr Sarkar and his party reached the north-east end of the Spike Island. This is another route of migration of the Jarawas from the South to North Andamans. Usually they come from the South Andaman and cross over to Bluff Island and then reach the Spike Island opposite to it. Loka gave the information that it was about this place that several Jarawas were shot sometime back and their bodies were buried in the Bluff Island. The party went along the coast of Neil Island and anchored off Foul Bay. Human footprints identified by Mr Joseph and Loka as belonging to the Jarawas were found in the sand. Following the footprints the party found the remnants of burnt ashes and cinder in a spot in the jungle. There were also vessels made of leaves for carrying water which were still wet. These were collected as specimens of Jarawa objects for the Department's collections. No traces of Jarawas themselves could however be found who must have moved into the jungles just prior to our party's visit. Our men then crossed over to Bluff Island and searched for the Jarawa skeletons, but none were found. On the 9th of March the "Kokhari" returned to Long Island, where it anchored. Loka brought his party of 21 individuals who were now settled in Neil Island. These people were carefully studied by Mr Sarkar and notes taken regarding their geneology, family structure and physical state, etc. On the 9th the Deputy Chief Commissioner, Mr S. C. Gupta with his wife arrived at Long Island. Mr Sarkar and his party accompanied him to Stewart Sound in his boat "Elsa". Unfortunately the few Andamanese who were living there happened to have gone out in their canoes for fishing and could not be contacted (*see* Plate I, Fig. 5). A 115 A 119 A 225 [411] A 215 [126] A [115]

They then went with Mr Gupta to the Karen village called *Webi* situated at a short distance from Stewart Sound. There were no Andamanese there, K 361

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Negritos

For the fact that the Andamanese inhabits the coastal areas of the Andamans, the fishing is an well-known art to them. The pristine culture is virtually lost and the few who are still now surviving have been brought under the folds of government help. Still now the headmen of the Andamanese in the Middle Andaman, *Loka* is found doing turtle hunting in their canoes and climbing up the coconut trees without the help of any rope. Still now they are found dancing in groups but they are few and far between. All of them wear clothes and live in the huts made by the Forest Department.

THE ABORIGINES OF THE LITTLE ANDAMAN GROUP.

The Onges, the Jarawas and the Sentinelese belong to this group.

The Jarawas

Of all these three groups, the Jarawas only live in the Great Andamans and their occurrence in the Great Andamans has been explained by many authorities, as has been explained earlier. The Jarawas are implacably hostile and the best of efforts to bring them under terms of amity have proved furtile. Lt. Colebrook and Archibald Blair first came in contact with the Jarawas and in course of time, the Aka-beas, belonging to the Great Andaman Group, living in the South Andaman became friendly with the foreigners while the hostility of the Jarawas remained unabated. The Jarawa hostility has been always increasing and it was more so since 1921. In 1923, 37 Jarawas were shot and in 1938, a Jarawa woman and her 4 children were captured. So the chances of meeting the Jarawas have been few and far between and the great decline in their number has in all practical senses stopped the apprehension of their raids in the new settlement areas. Still now, of course a person penetrating deep into the forests of the eastern parts of South Andaman should always be on the guard against an attack from the Jarawas.

The Onges.

The Onges, having experienced the impact of the foreigners at the latest period, are at present the most widesprend of all the aborigines of the Andamans. They do not have the truculence of the Jarawas and the attempts for bringing them under closer ties and terms of amity with the foreigners have proved successful, though the essential traits of their social, cultural and material life remain unaltered.

two have added feathers, and poisoned tips, in imitation of neighbouring peoples.

For the capture of large fish and animals such as turtles, dolphins and dugong, the Onges and Arioto use not the arrow harpoon but the spear harpoon. Brown saw none of these among the Onges he studied in Rutland, and consequently assumed its absence on Little Andaman. The Onges carry as little as possible on their sea voyages for the sake of speed, and would not therefore take spear harpoons (used only for marine hunting) with them on trips to Rutland, which they visit only for the purpose of hunting pigs and not to fish, or to hunt marine animals. They certainly have, and use, spear harpoons even today; I myself have been with the Onges and seen their harpoons used from the canoes. I had ample opportunity to admire both the effectiveness of the weapons and the accuracy of the throwers.

The greater structural and operational simplicity of the spear harpoon, in comparison with the arrow harpoon, leads one to suppose it the older of the two. Its cord is made of tough *Hibiscus* fibres, and with the aid of these and a straight shaft about six metres long and little over four centimetres in diameter, even the humblest of nails, seven centimetres long and three millimetres in diameter, can become the point of a spear harpoon. It is fixed into the shaft (usually of mangrove wood) which is hollowed out at the thinner end to take it, and with a cord up to a hundred metres long or more attached to the nail two centimetres from the head, the spear harpoon is ready for use – shaft, point and cord.

When the harpoon is to be used for turtles, no barbs are needed, as the point is driven so firmly into the shell that blocks of wood have to be carried in the canoes to knock it out for re-use.

The harpoon throwers stand ready on the platform jutting out fore and aft of the canoes (see p. 122), the free end of the cord is tied to one of the booms to prevent it being jerked out of the canoe as the victim tries to escape, and the slack is coiled in the bottom of the canoe. The thrower holds the cord against the harpoon as he waits for the right moment and then throws. As the harpoon strikes, the point detaches from the shaft, which floats on the water till picked up – often to be used as a punt-pole in the shallow waters of the coral reef as the canoe follows the victim, now held firmly on the end of the cord.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

build it (when I wanted to acquire two for the new anthropological museum at Port Blair and the Indian Museum in Calcutta I had to bargain with the men recognized as the owners, although the price had to be distributed among all the members of the group).

The chief delight of the men on their fishing trips is the capture of a Giant Turtle. I have already described (p. 88) the spear harpoons which the Onges use to catch them. Once caught, the wretched animals are subjected to a form of vivisection utterly incomprehensible to the Western mind; they are literally cut up alive and the pieces thrown into the boiling cooking-pot. Nor have I ever witnessed anything so terrible as the way in which the Onges, in the absence of any suitable cooking vessel, or the materials for an earth oven, roast these turtles whole and alive over a slow fire. They seem totally unable to realize that animals can feel pain and laugh like children at the other atrocious tortures they unwittingly inflict not only on the turtles, but on every living thing that falls into their hands.

These marine turtles (as far as I was able to see there were no land turtles in the Andamans) yield a far greater amount of food than the dugong, and provide the islanders with both meat and eggs. Two species are common in the seas round the islands, *Chelonia virgata*, or the green turtle, and *Caretta imbricata*, which supplies the shells normally sold commercially. The Onges prefer the former, which are both meaty and more plentiful.

Turtle-hunting and egg-collecting is done by the menfolk. The method is very like that used for dugong and large fish, using the harpoon. Owing to their fear of the spirits abroad in the night, the Onges never go near the beaches between dusk and dawn, when it would be easy to take the turtles on land and immobilize them by turning them on their backs. They do know this trick, however, and use it when captured turtles (often weighing up to a hundredweight) are too heavy to carry in the canoe; the animals are turned on their backs and dumped on the beach ready to pick up later.

The Onges harpoon the turtles from canoes, preferably at night when the turtles are nearing the shore, which they never approach in the day time. When there is a moon the creatures are easily seen, and on dark nights the phosphorescence of the sea helps.

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Once struck by the harpoon the turtle is trapped by the cord tied to the head of the harpoon while the shaft, detached by the blow, floats on the water till it is picked up. The target is large, the distance is short, and so the harpoon never fails.

The spirits of the night do not walk on the sea, so the turtle-hunting expeditions are all sea-borne, the canoes setting out to meet the turtles as they come in towards the shore to mate. When the moon is high the tropical seas are as clear as by day; on dark nights the resin torches carried in the canoes light the sea for a fair distance. Beyond their range, the turtles as they swim disturb tiny marine creatures, which promptly emit their phosphorescence, revealing clearly to the Onges the path of their unsuspecting victim.

These torches are about one metre long and fifteen centimetres in diameter, made of twisted palm leaves tightly bound with reed fibres. Inside is a carefully balanced mixture of resin and embers, which burns with a very bright flame. In recent years a variant has been introduced – huge lumps of gum were driven on to the shores of Little Andaman from some unknown distant shipwreck, and the Onges, having discovered how well the unknown substance burned, began mixing it with the embers in their torches. I can still see the Onges' child-like pleasure as they admired the effect of their new product, a gift, like their petrol-drum cooking-pots, from the sea.

Their torches for use on land are much smaller – about thirty centimetres long and ten centimetres in diameter, but made in exactly the same way. It is interesting that similar torches are found eastwards throughout Polynesia and are used everywhere in the same way for hunting turtles and their eggs from the same type of canoe.

The victim, struck as it comes to the top to breathe, disappears at once into the sea, dragging the cord with it. In less than ten minutes, however, it reappears on the surface and is hoisted aboard, often almost helping itself into the canoe with its thrashing flippers. Quite often turtles are caught while they are asleep on the surface, or mating, in which case the pair are easily captured. And in stormy weather, when the high seas make it difficult for them to negotiate the reefs back to the open water, the Onges can catch them and 'ride' them to the shore. I have seen the surviving Arioto do this,

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225 turning the turtle over on its back as soon as it is landed, and then blinding the wretched creature by putting both eyes out with a sharp stick, so that it cannot escape even if it manages to right itself.

222 Turtle eggs are easy to find. Before laying them in the sand about one metre deep, the turtle makes several visits about a fortnight beforehand to choose the spot. The huge footprints she leaves in the sand are easily seen, and watch is kept on the spot. When the Onges know roughly where to look they know that by poking in the sand with a stick they must in the end find the eggs. As one man, and happy as sandboys, they dig in the sand, lower and lower, till the sight of the first egg is greeted with a shout of triumph. One by one the eggs emerge to fill the baskets, hastily improvised and lined with great leaves.

The female may actually be seen depositing the eggs, up to two hundred at a time. Some will be infertile, and are smaller, with no yolk, but normally they are the size and shape of a billiard ball, deposited one after another at the rate of ten a minute. As they are laid a viscous secretion flows over them so that the sand sticks to them. As it dries, however, the sand can be rubbed off the shells, which are not rigid and resemble a shining white parchment; on each egg is a tiny round indentation, which increases in size within two or three days and makes the egg look as though it has shrivelled in the sun. In fact, the eggs will not hatch unless they remain buried deep in the sand.

136 222 Not more than half the turtle eggs laid in the Andamans hatch out into young turtles, so eager for them are man and beast alike. Man is their worst enemy, and it is no exaggeration to say that no clutch laid on Little Andaman has any hope of hatching. Man and animals alike range the beaches in search of the delicacy. First come the pigs, so greedy that if they come upon a female in the act of laying they give her no time even to cover the eggs. Then come the monitors, voracious lizards two metres long, and on the east coast near Nachuge, huge crocodiles as well. Finally, *Paradoxurus*, the wild cat of the Andamans, takes anything that is left.

The Onges have to compete with all these for turtle eggs, and they are nearly always too late. They have to look instead to the 136 deserted islands, like the nearby South and North Brother. Here the young turtles have some chance of hatching, but as soon as they

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for them and feeding them on the table. As soon as they saw worms wriggling, they would move cautiously towards them and then snap them up like lightning. They became used to sitting in my hand quite undisturbed, looking round in two directions at once in an interested way. Flies held by the wings fascinated them more than anything, and they used to stare at the insects as though hoping to mesmerize them. They made delightful pets.

More prosaically, they are very good fried. Outside Little Andaman I found hundreds every day near Golpahar on Middle Andaman, and as the fish market in Port Blair was over a day's journey away we used many for non-scientific purposes.

Dugong, monitors, snakes, jungle cats, bats, leeches – all abound in Little Andaman and I had ample opportunities to study them. The dugong are well known to the Onges, but I only saw them at Bumila Creek (Cuateniabo) and Jackson Creek, where I did not have the time to catch any; the Onges tried, but without result.

Dugong (from the Malayan *Dyong*, introduced into scientific Latin as the family Dugongidae), are large mammals of the order *Sirenia*. They have a short fish-like body, with closeable nostrils above a cavernous mouth, which is surrounded by short bristly whiskers and armed with a brush-like, horny plate. In the male two short tusks hang down each side of the mouth, like a miniature hippopotamus, giving the animals a cumbersome, ugly look. The Onges prize the dugong, but rarely manage to capture one; when they do, there is great feasting. I was never able to try it, or even acquire any really close observations of the creatures.

Monitors or dragon-lizards, on the other hand were under my feet every day, although the islanders never eat them. I used to put out as bait fish or pig carcasses rejected by the Onges as being too lean, and we could then shoot as many as we wanted as they rushed to the bait from all sides. I collected their skins for various museums, using the carcasses as further bait.

The Andamanese variety is well known and it closely resembles *Varanus niloticus*, the Nile monitor, to which it is related. The largest can be two metres long, including the long, very tapering tail. As they approach their prey, sniffing at it, their forked tongue, twice the length of the head, flashes in and out of its sheath with incredible speed. Although they have strong legs they move slowly and it is easy to catch them by the tail, providing one takes care to

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in the division of all meat. Certain cuts are the property of the hunter, of his helpers, and of his relations and after them, in order, of the remaining members of the group; everyone knows his position in advance. Each portion is tied round with a reed fibre, which is allowed to dangle out over the top of the communal cooking-pot ready to haul the meat out when required.

In the case of pork the prized cut is one which comprises the kidneys and the surrounding fat; this fat is called *cian*,[1] and is very highly esteemed. Some authors (Brown, for example) have stated that turtles and pigs are always cut up with the head ritually pointing towards the sea as otherwise the meat would be considered inedible. This is certainly not the case on Little Andaman, and I have never seen any such directional ritual among any of the Negritos, all of whom practise division of meat according to a prescribed order of precedence. Turtles at any rate are slaughtered facing up the sloping beach simply because it is then easier to hold the beast from behind and avoid its bite. Ritual there is, but usually with a good practical basis.

More ritual attaches to the way in which the game is carried back to the camp, and the wood to be used for the cooking fire. Pigs, killed and gutted, are tied in ropes made of *Ficus laccifera* and carried somehow on the back of the victorious hunter. If it is not far to the camp he will not bother to tie up the snout and feet, but otherwise the front and back legs are tied, and one long cord joins both pairs to the snout – again a practical ritual, giving the hunter a more compact weight to carry.

Man, Portman, Brown and others all say that each type of game has to be cooked over a fire of a particular wood. My own observations showed that whereas the ritual of dissection is inviolable, the Onges always use the first wood that comes to hand, regardless of its source, taking as usual the line of least resistance. This is again in keeping with the tendency of primitive peoples to expend only the very minimum of energy to achieve their object. Their religious beliefs and superstitions are not carried to the limit, simply because

[1] It is interesting that in their very restricted world the Onges have few standards of comparison or words to express condemnation or approval, and this word *cian* is used as one of high praise, applied to inanimate objects, animals, and people alike. The precise qualities which are conveyed by the word are difficult to evaluate in the absence of fuller knowledge of the Onge language.